

Sales Solutions

Help clients get the most from your sales training

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by [Andrea Sittig-Rolf](#)

Question: I'm a sales rep working for a sales training company in Seattle. Because our training is somewhat intangible in terms of results, how can I guarantee my clients will be satisfied with our performance when training their salespeople?

Answer: Selling a service that you perceive doesn't offer quantified results can be difficult, but it's not impossible. First, your perception needs to change from the idea that your sales training programs offer only intangible, unquantifiable results to the fact that your programs can actually offer tangible, quantifiable results.

Once you've changed your perception, the key to your success with this type of sale is to ask each prospect what a successful sales training program outcome will look like to them. Often we fall into the trap of using buzzwords with our prospects such as "increased productivity," "cost savings," or "better efficiency." The trouble with using these catch phrases is that your prospects have heard it all before, so they're numb to it and it's no longer very effective. Instead, by asking your prospects what a successful outcome will look like to them you do the following:

- Differentiate the "hot buttons" of prospects in different industries.
- Learn from your prospects the best way to sell specifically to them based on understanding their goals of sales training.
- Focus on the goal or outcome desired by your prospects to then work backward to plan how to obtain the desired goal.
- Understand the specific, quantified results your prospects are looking for and how you will attain them.
- Learn how to present your solution in a way that resonates with your prospects.

Now, let's analyze the first two of the above for a better understanding of each. Then we'll explore the last three in an upcoming Sales Solutions column.

Differentiating the hot buttons of prospects in different industries is a huge step in understanding how to sell your sales training solutions to various vertical markets. For example, once you know that banks are looking for sales training solutions that will increase the number of loans closed by their loan consultants each month, you can use that information with all bank prospects as a starting point in working with them.

Or, maybe you determine that telecommunications companies are most interested in their salespeople doing the required activity each month that will help them reach their revenue and profitability goals. Discovering these hot buttons gives you a leg up when working with new prospects in industries with which you're already familiar.

Next, learning from your prospects the best way to sell specifically to them will help you hone your solution so that it's customized for their particular needs. Make open-ended statements such as:

- Tell me about what's happening with your sales team now.
- Please describe where you think there might be a breakdown in your sales process.
- Help me understand what a specific end result of sales training might look like to you.

The more specific answers you can get from your prospects, the more specific your proposal and solution will be. Ask your prospect to do the quantifying for you. In other words, make sure you ask the right

questions so that they give you quantifiable answers. Rather than obtaining an answer such as "We'd like to increase sales," encourage your prospects to tell you exactly by how much they'd like to increase sales, i.e. 20 percent? 30 percent? Also, be sure that what your prospects are asking for is a reasonable result so that you can set the expectation right up front as to what your solution will provide.

Stay tuned for the upcoming Sales Solutions to learn more about focusing on the outcome desired by the prospect, understanding the specific, quantified results your prospect is looking for, and presenting your solution in a way that resonates with your prospect.

ANDREA SITTIG-ROLF is a public speaker, author, and president of Sittig Inc., a sales training and consulting firm. Her new book, "Business-to-Business Prospecting: Innovative Techniques to Get Your Foot in the Door with Any Prospect" (Aspatore Books) is available on Amazon.com. Reach her at 206-769-4886 or www.sittiginc.com, and send your "Sales Solutions" questions to info@sittiginc.com.